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CHATTERIS URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

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A N N U A L R E P O R T

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the

Year ended 31st December, 1953.



# ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

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For the year ending 31st December, 1953.

To the Chairman and Members of  
CHATTERIS URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

I have pleasure in submitting to you my Annual Report upon the vital statistics and sanitary work of your District for the year ending 31st December, 1953.

## VITAL STATISTICS.

POPULATION. There was an increase of 25 in the estimated total population from 5528 in 1952 to 5553 in 1953.

BIRTH RATE. The birth rate per thousand of the population showed a slight increase, being 9.58 in 1952 and 17.83 in 1953.

There were three still births during 1953.

GENERAL DEATH RATE. The death rate for 1953 was 11.165 per thousand of the population compared with 6.87 in 1952. The total number of deaths in the Urban District in 1953 was 62. in 1952, 38. For comparison I have set out below Death rates as previously reported.

1937.	12.35	per	thousand	of	population.
1938.	9.94	"	"	"	"
1939.	11.10	"	"	"	"
1945.	13.99	"	"	"	"
1946.	13.17	"	"	"	"
1947.	14.41	"	"	"	"
1948.	11.89	"	"	"	"
1950.	9.45	"	"	"	"
1951.	8.18	"	"	"	"
1952.	6.87	"	"	"	"

NATURAL INCREASE OF THE POPULATION. The numbers of births in excess of deaths in 1953 was 37 in 1952 it was 15.

INFANT MORTALITY The death rate of infants under one year of age per thousand live births was 3.03 compared with 37.72 in 1952. The total number of deaths was 3 in 1953, 2 in 1952.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES. There were no deaths from infectious diseases or of children under two years of age from diarrhoea.

An epidemic of measles began on 31st December 1952. 89 cases were notified during January 1953 and 65 during February. The number of notifications fell rapidly towards the end of February and a mild epidemic of chicken pox began almost immediately. This extended into August reaching a peak during June when there were 48 notifications.



## HEALTH SERVICES & PREVENTIVE MEDICINE IN THE AREA

Staff                      One part time Medical Officer.  
                              One whole time Sanitary Inspector.

A District Midwife is appointed and a Maternal and Child Welfare Clinic is held weekly. An ante-natal clinic is organised by local medical practitioners. The arrangements generally for the care of expectant and nursing mothers and young children are adequate. The health visiting service is working satisfactorily.

ILLNESS- CARE AND AFTER CARE Vaccination and diphtheria immunisation services are available. The ambulance service is very good and the domestic help service satisfactory. Pathological investigations are carried out at the Pathological Laboratory, Tennis Court Road, Cambridge. Hospital treatment is available at Doddington Hospital, Addenbrooke's Hospital and Peterborough Memorial Hospital.

## SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Water Supply. Wisbech & District Water Board are the Statutory Authority and a piped main supply from Marham, Norfolk is provided to 1446 houses directly whilst 306 houses are only supplied by standpipes. The remaining houses in the outlying rural area have no piped supply. The houses which are only supplied by standpipe are mainly in poor structural condition and provide some guide as to the possible size of any slum clearance scheme which may be envisaged.

It is essential not only to continue to attract workers to the outlying fen area but also to provide satisfactory standard of health and amenity that piped mains supply should be afforded to the outlying districts of the area as soon as possible.

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal. The Acre Fen sewage disposal plant is now commissioned and is working satisfactorily. This plant serves 40 per cent of the town area and a good quality effluent is being produced.

Crude sewage is still discharged untreated into open surface water drainage dykes from five principal outfalls.

The town area is adequately sewered but the outfalls to the sewers are situated in close proximity to housing estates ( in one case less than 100 yards) and the public footpaths cross the dykes themselves. The dykes have little natural flow in summer and the consequent stagnant filthy conditions give rise to strong smells and could precipitate the spread of water borne diseases. The resultant danger to the health of the inhabitants of Chatteris cannot be overstressed. Rat infestation of gardens to houses in the vicinity of the outfalls regularly occurs despite vigorous treatment. In the future, housing development will proceed beyond the present outfalls. Fouling of watercourses and main drainage river occurs. The high biochemical oxygen demand of the sewage results in the intolerable conditions for fish life in the Twenty Foot and Forty Foot Rivers.

Proposals It is proposed to take the existing sewage from the outfalls by trunk sewers to a new sewage disposal



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works designed on modern lines in Nighlayer Fen and to pipe in the drainage dykes in Birch Fen which will still be used as storm overflows. The scheme is designed to allow the necessary housing development to proceed without danger to health.

In my opinion this scheme is most essential and urgent in the public health interest and should proceed immediately to

- a) remove the serious pollution now taking place in the local rivers in which the young people of Chatteris bathe.
- b) obviate the grave risk of epidemic water borne disease.
- c) allow housing development to proceed on balanced and rational lines.
- d) remedy the nuisance of the drainage dykes which run alongside public footpaths (I myself in my youth have slipped in twice)
- e) eradicate the danger to the public health and amenities of Chatteris.

This scheme is now under Ministry consideration and an early starting date should be awarded.

Public Cleansing. House refuse is cleared by contract weekly. There is room for improvement in the methods of collection and the equipment available. Street scavenging is carried out satisfactorily. A critical labour shortage hampers the improvements of these services but steps to improve the service should be taken as opportunity is afforded.

The labour shortage hampers work at the Refuse Dump but the situation here is generally becoming more satisfactory.

Rivers and Streams. There are no natural rivers or streams within the Urban area. The town is situated on a layer of Kimmeridge clay thrown up and forming high land above the fen. The rainfall in the area has always gravitated on the east and west sides into the low lying fens. This outfall is intercepted by the artificial cuts and "rivers" made some 300 years ago when the fens were reclaimed.

Closet Accommodation. This is entirely on the water carriage system in the urban area.

Schools. The schools are all supplied with piped water and the general sanitary conditions satisfactory.

Food. There is no central slaughterhouse within the urban area. Supplies of meat are delivered weekly from Ely. The only animals inspected were killed in emergency. Appended is the record of inspection of carcasses.

All the premises of food retailers were inspected and found satisfactory. Where minor defects were found they were quickly remedied.

There were no food poisoning outbreaks during the period under review.





Inspection of ice cream producers and retailers are made regularly and satisfactory condition of sales prevail. Some 98% of the ice cream and frozen fruit juices is produced outside the district and retailed wrapped or cartoned under hygienic conditions.

Attached is a copy of the state of Factories and Workshops in the area.

Remedy of defects during the year without service of Formal Notices.

Number of minor defects in dwelling houses remedied in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers.....182

Proceeding under Public Health Acts:

Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied..... 8

Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices By owners..... 8

Rats and Mice Infestation. The sewers of the town are reasonably free from rat infestation and have been twice satisfactorily treated in accordance with recommended Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries proceedings.

Difficulty is experienced in controlling rat infestation at the outfall dykes.

Some cases of infestation of premises have been remedied during the year.

A part-time trained operator is available for this work.

During the year the Council's refuse dump at Campole Drove was found to be heavily infested with rats but after treatment the Dump was practically cleared. Regular baiting and poisoning is now carried out.

Housing. Figures showing the progress made during the year are appended. Steps have been taken to acquire more land to ensure continuity in the housing campaign.

I am, Mr. Chairman and Members,

Your obedient Servant,

*R. S. Wether*

Medical Officer of Health.



STATISTICAL SUMMARY AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS.Particulars of District

Area ( in acres)	13719
Estimated population mid 1953	5553
Rateable Value	£19627
Product of ld rate	£ 76
Number of inhabited houses	1792.

Extracts from Vital Statistics.

	Males	Females	Total.
Live Births (legitimate)	57	40	97
Live births (illegitimate)		2	2
Still births	-	3	3
Deaths	29	33	62
Birth Rate per 100 population			17.83
Death rate per 100 est. population			11.165

Death rate of infants under 1 year.

All infants per 100 live births			3.03.
Deaths of infants under 1 yr legitimate	2	1	3.
Deaths of infants under 4 wks "	2	1	3.

Deaths

The chief causes of deaths were;

	Males	Females	Total
Malignant neoplasm, stomach	3	3	6
" " lung, bronchus	2	-	2
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	-	6	6
Diabetes	-	1	1
Vascular lesions of nervous system	4	3	7
Coronary disease, angina	2	5	7
Hypertension with heart disease	1	1	2
Other heart disease	11	10	21
Other circulatory disease	1	-	1
Congenital malformations	1	-	1
Other defined and ill-defined diseases	4	3	7
Suicide	-	1	1
	29	33	62

Infectious Diseases.

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Female</u>
Scarlet Fever	5	5
Whooping Cough	-	3
Measles	125	147
Acute Pneumonia	-	1
Tuberculouses	1	-
Infective Hepatitis	1	-
Chicken Pox	72	63
Meningococcal Infection	1	-
	<u>205</u>	<u>219.</u>



Carcases Inspected and Condemned.

	Cattle excluding cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep & Lambs	Pigs.
Number killed(if known)	-	-	-	-	-
Number inspected	-	-	-	-	38
<u>All diseases except Tuberculosis</u>					
Whole carcasses condemned.	-	-	-	-	-
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned.	-	-	-	-	5
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis	-	-	-	-	13.156
Tuberculosis only whole carcasses condemned.	-	-	-	-	-
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned.	-	-	-	-	-
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis	-	-	-	-	-





Housing Position at 31st December 1953.

	Post - War Housing		
	Council	Private Enterprise	Housing Association.
Total number let in Contracts.	260	87	18
Total number completed and occupied	210	82	12
Total completed during 1953 (included in total number completed above)	28	3	9
Under construction	42	4	6



8.  
FACTORIES ACT 1937 and 1948

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health in respect of the year 1953 for the  
Urban District Council of Chatteris in the County of Cambridgeshire

Part I of the Act  
1. Inspection for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by the Sanitary Inspector)

Premises 1.	M/c line 2.	Number on Register 3.	Number of		Occupiers Prosecuted	M/c line
			Inspections 4	Written Notices 5.		
Factories in which Sec1,2,3,4, & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authority	1	5	15	-	-	7.
Factories not included in 1 (in which Dec.7 is enforced by Local Authority	2.	23	68	-	-	-
Other premises in which Sec.7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding cutworkers premises.)	3.	2.	8	-	-	-
Total		30	91.	-	-	-



PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT 1949  
REPORT FOR 15 MONTHS ENDED 31st MARCH, 1954.

	Type of Property				Total.
	Local Authority	Dwelling House	Agricultural	All other (incl. business premises)	
	1	2	3	4	5
Total number of properties in Local Authority's District.	4.	1735	300	218	2257
Number of properties inspected by the Local Authority during the 15 months ended 31st March, 1954 as a result of a) notification, b) survey under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 c) otherwise e.g. when visited primarily for some other purpose	a)	28	5	2	35
	b)	-	-	-	-
	c) 4.	350	10	120	484.
Number of properties inspected which were found to be infested by rats	Major			1	1
	Minor	49	5	1	55.
Number of properties inspected which were found to be seriously infested by mice.	-	4	-	-	4
Number of infested properties treated by the Local Authority	-	53	5	2	60.
Number of Notices served under Section 4. Treatment Structural Works (i.e. roofing)	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Number of cases in which default action was taken by the Local Authority following the issue of a notice under Section 4.	-	-	-	-	-
Legal proceedings	-	-	-	-	-
Number of "block" control schemes carried out.	-	-	-	-	-





SUMMARY OF FOOD INSPECTIONS 1953.1) Number of Food Premises

Cafes	3.	Grocers	17
Hotels	2.	Butchers	9.
Milk Producers	4.	Greengrocers	7.
Milk Retailers	3.		
Bakers	7.		
Fish	4		

2) Number of premises registered under Section 14 of the Food & Drugs Act 1938

Ice Cream Retailers	16.
Ice Cream Producers	2.
Sausages Producers Etc	9.
No of Dairies	7.

3) Number of Inspections of Registered Food Premises 194.  
Number of Inspections of Food Premises including above 340.4) Condemned Food is nowadays disposed of by burning in the refuse incinerator except for large articles and tinned foods which are normally buried with four feet of cover and surrounded with a nine inch layer of quicklime.5) The total quantity of food condemned during the year is as under:-

Pork	23 lb
Beef	212 lb
Mutton	192 lb
Fish	11 lb

Tinned foods

Tinned meat	26 lb
Milk	10 lb
Fruit & Miscellaneous.	30 lb.

